

HOLE IN THE ROCK FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER — JULY 2018

Bluff Fort Visitor Historic Site and
Hole in the Rock Foundation
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Do you recognize this scene?
Check your answer, page 3.



The Waterwheel and surrounding exhibits were dedicated as part of the Founders Day activities. Over 100 people gathered in the Log Meeting House for the dedication. With windows open on a beautiful spring day in Bluff, the family of Sarah and Henry Holyoak and other friends joined together.

David Knutson spoke about family and heritage of Henry and Sarah Holyoak, the Jordan Knutson family sang, and the prayer of dedication was offered by Ron Holyoak

The congregation then moved from the Log Meeting House to the Waterwheel Exhibit. Aunt Sarah Ann Holyoak Wagner, matriarch of the



group, turned on the switch as the crowd applauded. The 13' wheel began its rotation. The buckets began filling and soon water was splashing down the chute filling the irrigation ditch.

Roberta Holyoak Knutson and her sister, Cheryl Knutson Nyland, took off their shoes and socks and waded in the stream, much like pioneers might have done to cool off on a hot summer day.

There was a key group of family members that helped raise money and made a substantial donation towards the construction of the waterwheel and the exhibit. The rest of the donation came from the Sorenson Legacy Foundation, long time friends of Bluff Fort.

Dale Black and a host of Church Service Missionaries had constructed the wheel and exhibit in 2016 as part of their summer work. Others then aided with final engineering to get the wheel turning.

Underground vaults hold water to recycle in the water system.

The Waterwheel now greets Fort visitors as they exit the Co-op. The splashing of water and ditches also help to lower the temperature on hot summer days, if not physically, then psychologically.

Many thanks to all who helped with the project which signage created by Lamont Crabtree, Graig Taylor and Mary Gay Jones, along with an audio clip help visitors understand the importance of water in this little pioneer settlement.

Message from the Director

Bluff Founders Day April 6-8, 2018

Like a sampler quilt, Founders Day in Bluff this year included a little bit of everything in the three-day event. From fun and frivolity, to serene and insightful



experiences, it was a great gathering which honored the 1880 pioneers and their stickie-Ta-Tudy. 25 missionaries, 17 Docents and 10 former

missionaries who have served at Bluff Fort in previous seasons played a significant role in the success of the 2nd annual event.

Friday activities included two dedications: the new Bluff Mural, and the Bluff Fort waterwheel. Although there was not a water wheel at Bluff, there were several water wheels along the San Juan River. The Barton/Hyde trading post at Rincon had one as well as the Montezuma Creek area. In issue #12 of Blue Mountain Shadows (1993) Jim Aton, discussed the settlers' efforts at harnessing the San Juan River. He explained their efforts in building a canal, and their failed efforts because of the sandiness. Unlike the Montezuma Creek pioneers who built a water wheel, Bluff had to contend with the erratic San Juan river, which lacked a location with a rock foundation where such a wheel could be anchored. The wheel in Montezuma Creek was 16 foot wide and could lift 23,000 gallons of water per hour.

"Between 1881-1883, the river and ditch took the Bluff colony on a roller coaster ride. For example, the May 6 flood of 1882 washed out 500 feet of ditch, seriously interrupting the farming venture."

All settlements were part of the mission to the San Juan, as far distant as Mancos, Colorado. The current museum at Bluff fort is intended to commemorate



the pioneers who came here and spread out along the San Juan.

The Holyoak family was honored for their contributions to the water wheel display we have on the Fort. There were speeches and music held in the log meeting house that barely held all of those wanting to attend. A dedicatory prayer was given by one of the oldest descendants at the wheel which was then turned on. The water wheel is one of the most popular attractions to the Fort and we as missionaries greatly appreciate this addition to the Fort.

Heritage Demonstrations

There were many Heritage demonstrations at the Bluff Fort (2 - 6 PM) including Dutch Oven cooking, rag rug weaving, blacksmithing, and in the evening square dancing. The Desert Rose hosted history/ story telling from 3-6 PM with presenters: Jonathan Till, Winston Hurst, Don Larson, Heather Young, Bob McPherson, and Mikki Palmer. A good crowd attended from 3-6 PM at the beautiful Desert Rose patio. Following each set of two speakers a Q & A followed. Topics focused specifically on the Bluff area and included archaeology, pioneer men and women, Mormons & the Anasazi and Cowboys.

Saturday's events started with breakfast served between 7-9 AM at the Bluff Fort by one of the vendors, followed by a parade at 10 AM. The parade

included two bands, covered wagons, along with floats and other entries. Many pioneer families were represented.

Throughout the day, Heritage demonstrations continue at the Fort. Vendor trucks sold food, and Twin Rocks hosted a delicious and fun Fry



Bread sampling bar. The Blue Mountain Navajo Unity event was held at the Community Center, followed by basket weaving demos at Twin Rocks. The day ended with the famous Fry bread festival and fling, followed by a movie at 7 PM (Community Center).

Sunday activities included an Inter-denominational Service at St. Christopher's Mission, as well as services at the LDS Chapel in Bluff.

We are having a very successful year with overall attendance up nearly 15% from last year. I would like to thank all who have so generously contributed their time, talents and money so that we can continue to tell the story of these wonderful pioneers.

What is the image on page 1?

The banner photo shows the current site of the Bluff Fort Visitor Center as it appeared in 1893 just prior to the construction of the stone Co-op! Note the log meeting house, lower right. Original wooden store, lower left.

SPEAKING OF MYSTERIES . . .



We believe this is a photo taken in Bluff, but we do not know the occasion, nor have more than a guess as to any identifications.

For convenience, a numbered image is available for reference:

<http://bluffort.org/unknown-key.jpg>

This photo once belonged to Katrina Nielson Williams, granddaughter of both Jens Nielson, and Hyrum Perkins, who lived in Bluff. To see a larger image please go to <http://bluffort.org/unknown.jpg> If you know the photo's circumstances, or can positively identify someone in the photo, please contact David Walton, (801) 369-4959 [text okay].

Camp Stickie

by Stuart Matheson

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In addition to the amazing work of our Church Service Missionaries at the Fort itself, the Foundation continues its primary objective of telling the inspiring story of these hardy pioneers by hosting various youth groups at Camp Stickie-ta-tudy. Generous donations help build and sustain a beautiful and welcoming venue where youth and their leaders come to learn that they, too, can do hard things - just like the Hole in the Rock pioneers did. The Camp serves as the hub of the "wagon wheel" of activities designed to teach those who come that those eternal principles of faith, obedience, courage, strength, and perseverance evidenced by the early pioneers can help young people succeed in today's world. Through challenge courses, cooperative games, and just plain fun at the Camp itself,

participants learn valuable leadership skills. From the Camp, participants leave to stand on sacred ground - to hike San Juan Hill, the last major obstacle the pioneers overcame, or to walk the Salvation Knoll trail of those four scouts who blazed the trail for the main company of pioneers to follow. Away from their ever-present technology, participants experience firsthand the physical challenges faced by these pioneers as they stand at the base of San Juan Hill and see what those pioneers saw - a nearly impossibly steep grade that horses, oxen, and mules pulled their wagons up.

We remind and inspire these young people of their significance by quoting from Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "If you are faithful, the day will come when those deserving pioneers whom you rightly praise for having overcome the adversities in their wilderness trek will instead praise you for having made your way successfully through a desert of despair, for having passed through a cultural wilderness and having kept the faith ...And yes, you will rightly go on praising them for what they did in their days, but one day [they], including some of your ancestors, will praise you for having come safely home." (transcribed from CES fireside for young adults, June 4, 1995.)



Photo: Wagon-wheel ruts remain on San Juan Hill